



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 August 1968



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**THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
17 AUGUST 1968**

1. Vietnam

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2. Israel

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3. Israel-Jordan

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4. Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovak journalists do not yet understand that they are not to criticize the Soviet Union. Less than 24 hours after Dubcek cautioned the press to exercise self-restraint, a liberal Czech journal criticized Soviet "psychological warfare" during the recent confrontation. There have been other offensive articles. Soviet media replied in terms which suggest that Moscow feels the Czech press is out of line with agreements made at Bratislava. Dubcek is to talk with Prague newsmen today to explain--again--the regime's concept of freedom of the press.

5. Czechoslovakia - East Germany

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6. Poland

The factional struggle in the Polish Communist Party is beginning to show the impact of Czechoslovakia's liberal course. Edward Gierek, leader of Poland's key industrial province and a major contender for power, spoke to a large group of party activists on 15 August and called for freedom to criticize the party and its policies without fear of reprisals. His position is a direct swipe at Gomulka and is also an echo of a provision in the new draft of the Czech party statutes.

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7. Nigeria

Gowon is adamant about not accepting the proposal of the International Red Cross Committee to land relief supplies at an airstrip in Biafra. The probable reason for Gowon's position is that he does not want Biafran claims to sovereignty to be bolstered by direct Biafran contacts with the outside world. He contends, however, that Ojukwu selected a particular airstrip which would impede the advance of Federal forces, and he is irritated with the way the Red Cross representative has handled matters. Gowon told Ambassador Mathews that his offer of a land corridor was still open.

8. Soviet Union

Moscow's proposal this week for a new communications satellite system called Intersputnik seems aimed more at obtaining improved terms for Soviet entrance into INTELSAT than at actually setting up a new system, the prospects for which are not very good.

The Soviets object to INTELSAT's weighted voting system, which assures a dominant voice for the US. France and numerous small states in INTELSAT also dislike this system. By proposing a one nation, one vote formula, the Soviets probably hope to stir up enough dissatisfaction so that the control formula will be altered in next year's INTELSAT negotiations.

9. Arab States

Syria, faced with a new wave of coup plotting within and outside the country, has adopted trade restrictions to get its neighbors to crack down on Syrian exiles. The neighbors are retaliating. Saudi Arabia and Iraq have gotten nowhere with diplomatic protests

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Lebanon is reacting mildly, but seems determined not to curtail the activities of Syrian exiles. The situation is the latest evidence of growing Arab disunity.

10. Algeria-Israel

The Algerians have been sharply stung by the decision of the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association to boycott flights into Algeria in retaliation for Algeria's failure to release the hijacked El Al airliner. They are trying to enlist international support for their position and may demand that the Arab states adopt a counterboycott which would seriously disrupt international air travel.

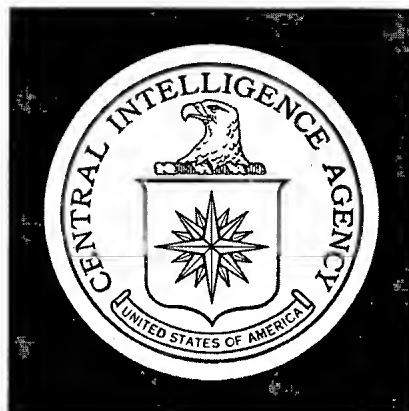
The airline boycott, scheduled to go into effect at midnight Sunday, could further damage relations between Algeria and France. The vast majority of flights into and within Algeria are flown by members of the French airline pilots organization which endorsed the boycott.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

17 August 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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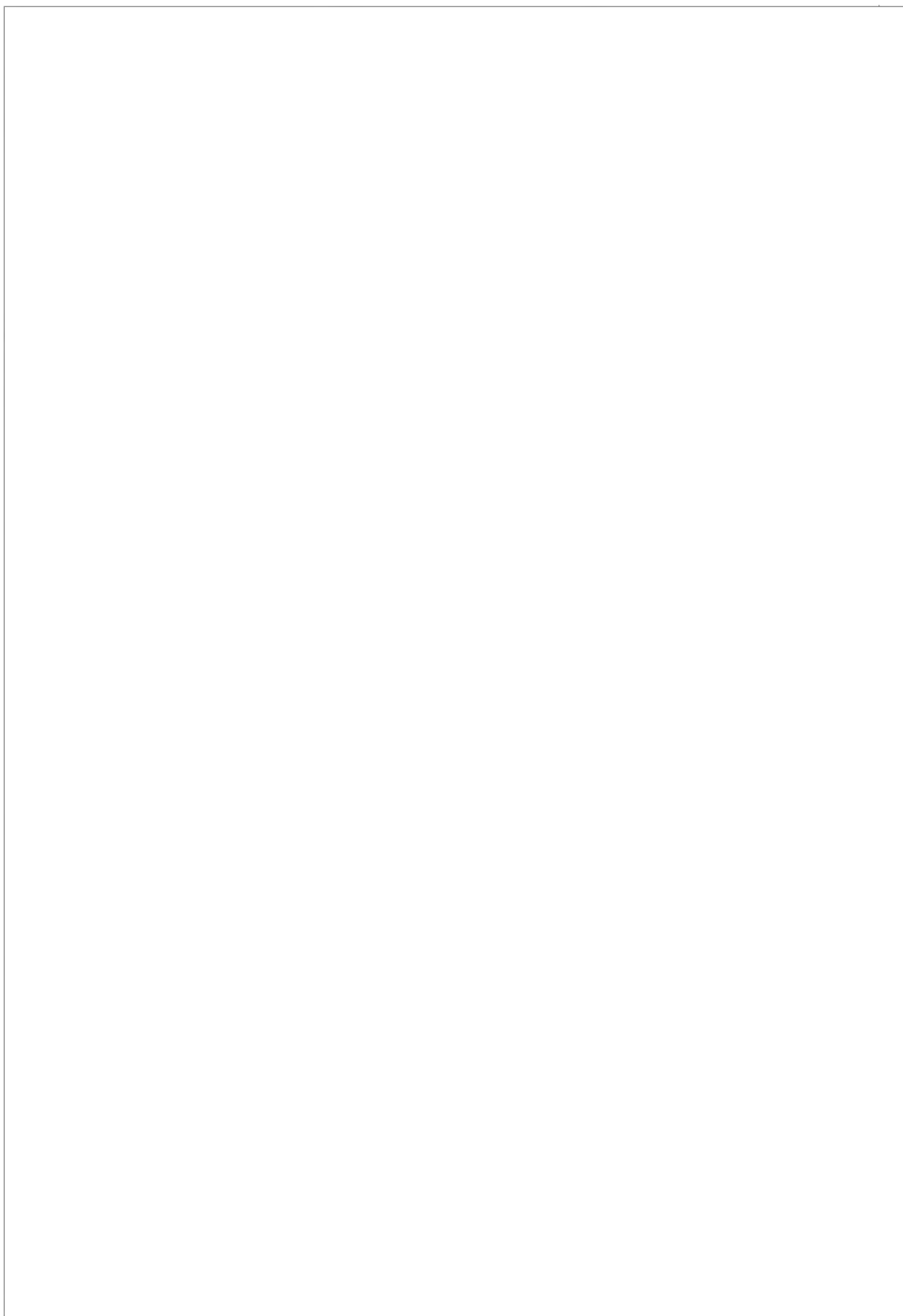
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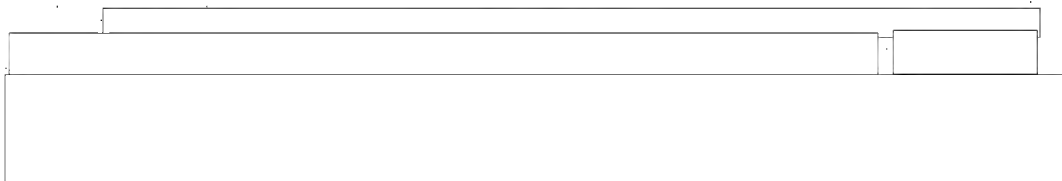
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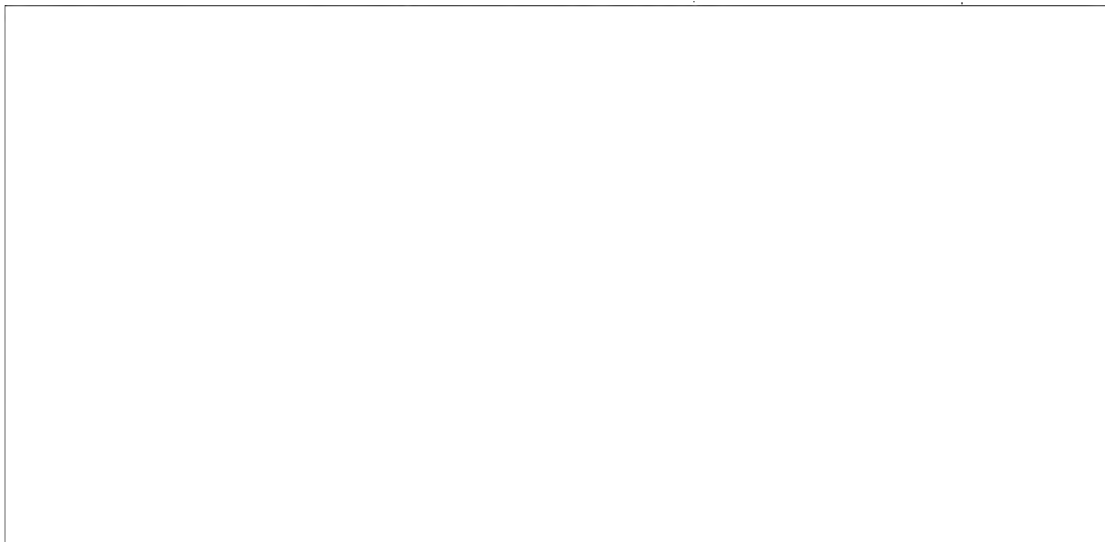


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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report to-
day.

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